

## Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CU-04 NIC-01 NEA-10 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 RSR-01 /099 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1538

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

USCINCSO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2256

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AR

SUBJECT: TWO DIE AS RESULT OF EXTREMIST BOMBING WAVE; " POLITICAL PRISONER" ISSUE RESURFACES

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. TWO PERSONS DIED AS A RESULT OF MARCH 30 EXTREMIST BOMBING WAVE IN BUENOS AIRES AND ROSARIO WHICH BROUGHT FORTH QUICK REPUDIATIONS OF ACTS BY BOTH OFFICIAL AND PERONIST CIRCLES. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, " POLITICAL PRISONER" ISSUE ONCE AGAIN RESURFACED IN FORM OF EXCHANGE OF STATEMENTS BETWEEN FRENTE JUSTICIALISTA AND PRESIDENT LANUSSE. CONTINUED UPSURGE IN EXTREMIST ACTIVITY HAS PRODUCED CONCURRENTLY GROWING FEARS IN PERONIST CAMP THAT TERRORISTS WILL NOT LAY DOWN ARMS ON MAY 25. END SUMMARY.

2. MORNING MAR 30 A POWERFUL EXPLOSION ROCKED THE EDIFICIO LIBERTAD, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY. ONE CONSCRIPT SAILOR WAS KILLED BY A BOMB WHICH ALSO CAUSED CONSIDERABLE MATERIAL DAMAGE. TOLL COULD HAVE BEEN MUCH HIGHER SINCE MEMBERS OF INCOMING AND OUTGOING CONSCRIPT CLASSES WERE IN BUILDING AT TIME OF BLAST ATTENDING CEREMONIES PRESIDED OVER BY NAVY CINC ADMIRAL CARLOS CODA.

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3. EXTREMISTS WERE ALSO BUSY ON MAR 30 IN SANTA FE PROVINCE, PLACING AT LEAST FIVE BOMBS AND COMMITTING ROBBERIES AT TWO OFFICES OF ENTEL, THE STATE- OWNED TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY. ONE BOMB EXPLODED AT THE RESIDENCE OF A FRENTE JUSTICIALISTA ( FJL) DEPUTY- ELECT IN ROSARIO KILLING HIS MOTHER, AND ANOTHER BLAST CAUSED MATERIAL DAMAGE TO THE ROSARIO COURTHOUSE. BOMBS PLANTED AT ROSARIO RESIDENCES OF THREE OTHER FJL OFFICIALS WERE DISARMED BY POLICE. ENTEL OFFICES IN SANTE FE AND VENADO TUERTO WERE ROBBER BY PRESUMED EXTREMISTS OF A PRESS- REPORTED 700,000 PESOS ( APPROXIMATELY US\$70,000).

4. WEEKEND LATER SAW ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING OF A ROSARIO POLICE OFFICIAL AND TAKEOVER OF SAN ISIDRO COURTHOUSE IN BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE WHICH RESULTED IN THEFT OF UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF WEAPONS BY ELEMENTS OF THE FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS ( FAR) ( MARXIST- LEANING PERONISTS).

5. REACTION TO THE TWO BOMBING DEATHS CAME QUICKLY FROM BOTH GOA AND PERONIST CIRCLES. AN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE REFERRED TO THE NAVY BUILDING BOMBING AS ANOTHER ACT PERPETRATED BY A SMALL MINORITY WHICH HOPES TO TAKE POWER THROUGH THE USE OF VIOLENCE. PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA SECGEN JUAN ABAL MEDINA DENOUNCED THE ROSARIO BOMBINGS OF RESIDENCES OF FJL OFFICIALS AS WELL; HOWEVER, HE DESCRIBED THE EPISODES AS PART OF A PLAN TO PREVENT THE " ASCENSION TO POWER BY THE PEOPLE" AND AGAIN WARNED POPULACE OF THE EXISTENCE OF A " CAMPAIGN OF PROVOCATION".

6. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, ISSUE OF " POLITICAL PRISONERS" RESURFACED WITH EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN FJL LEGAL REP ALBERTO FONROUGE AND PRESIDENT LANUSSE. ON MARCH 30 FONROUGE PRESENTED NOTE TO GOVERNMENT WHICH EXPRESSED CONCERN OF FRENTE OVER TREATMENT OF " DETAINEES FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CAUSES", AND REAFFIRMED FJL INTENT TO LEGISLATE BROAD AND AMPLE AMNESTY UPON ASSUMPTION OF POWER. ( COMMENT. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE DRAFT AMNESTY LAW ALREADY BEING CIRCULATED). LANUSSE ANSWERED THE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DAY BY AGAIN DENYING EXISTENCE OF " POLITICAL" PRISONERS AND STATING THAT THOSE 178 PERSONS BEING HELD AT DISPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER ( OF WHICH 23 HAVE NOT YET BEEN PROCESSED) ARE NOT SUBJECTED TO INHUMANE NOR SEVERE TREATMENT. THE RISKS ENTAILED IN DECREETING A BROAD AMNESTY, HE ADDED, ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WHO PROPOSE SUCH A LAW.

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7. COMMENT: DAO SOURCES CONFIRM PRESS REPORTS THAT VICTIM OF NAVY BUILDING BOMBING MAY BE LINKED TO ACT, SINCE INVESTIGATION OF EPISODE HAS UNCOVERED FACT THAT DEAD CONSCRIPT WAS MEMBER OF A LEFTIST STUDENT GROUP AND WAS UNHAPPY OVER HAVING BEEN INDUCTED. SAME SOURCES REPORT POSITION OF VICTIM'S BODY LENDS SOME CREDENCE TO THIS BELIEF. ATTRIBUTION IN REST OF TERRORIST ACTS HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE OTHER THAN ATTACK ON SAN ISIDRO COURTHOUSE.

8. THE QUICK REPUDIATION BY ABAL MEDINA OF THE MARCH 30 BUENOS AIRES AND ROSARIO BOMBINGS DEMONSTRATES GROWING FEARS WITHIN THE PERONIST MOVEMENT THAT TERRORIST GROUPS, WHETHER NOMINALLY PERONIST OR NOT, DO NOT PLAN TO LAY DOWN ARMS WHEN THE GOVERNMENT- ELECT TAKES POWER. TERRORISTS ACTS FOR MOST PART CONTINUE TO BE DIRECTED AT MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND SYMBOLS OF "IMPERIALISM", AND THE ISSUE OF "POLITICAL PRISONERS" REMAINS A POPULAR CAUSE. HOWEVER, WHEN THE SHOE IS ON THE OTHER FOOT, THE PERONISTS WILL, NO DOUBT, THINK TWICE BEFORE CONTINUING TO REFER TO THE EXTREMISTS AS "SPECIAL FORMATIONS" WITHIN THE PERONIST MOVEMENT OR OPENING UP THE JAILS INDISCRIMINATELY. INDEED, AS ONE PERONIST SOURCE PUT IT, THOSE TERRORISTS WHO DO NOT TURN TO MORE PEACEFUL MEANS WILL BE LABELED AS "TRAITORS TO THE MOVEMENT" AND TREATED AS SUCH.  
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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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